Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 03981 231450Z

42
ACTION EUR-12

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---------- 122887
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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8215
USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 3981

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN, SW
SUBJECT: COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF TREATMENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE SWEDISH MEDIA

1. MY PURPOSE IN THIS MESSAGE IS TO REQUEST ASSISTANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT AND USIA IN MAKING AN OBJECTIVE COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF SWEDISH MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE UNITED STATES.

2. DURING MY BRIEFINGS IN WASHINGTON, ONE POINT THAT WAS OFTEN UNDERSCORED--AND HAS BEEN SINCE REEMPHASIZED IN OUR POLICY ASSESSMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS UPON IT--WAS CONCERN ABOUT ONE-SIDED OR BIASED TREATMENT OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS BY THE SWEDISH MEDIA. SINCE I ARRIVED IN STOCKHOLM, I HAVE FOUND THIS CONCERN SHARED BY MANY WELL-BALANCED SWEDES. OF COURSE I UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS NOT ONLY THE US WHICH IS TREATED IN WHAT MANY CONSIDER A BIASED WAY; BUT SINCE THE U.S. IS SO MUCH IN THE NEWS, UNFAIR COVERAGE OF OUR AFFAIRS DOES SEEM TO STAND OUT.

3. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE STATE OF AFFAIRS WAS MUCH WORSE A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, AND WE ARE NOW ON AN UPWARD TREND. NEVERTHELESS, THIS IS ONE OF THE AREAS THAT I AM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT--AND AN AREA WHERE THE EMBASSY MIGHT MAKE A REAL CONTRIBUTION.

4. IN MEETING TO CONSIDER WHAT THE SITUATION IS AND
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PAGE 02 STOCKH 03981 231450Z

WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO ABOUT IT, WE SOON RAN UP AGAINST

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

A LACK OF AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE SWEDISH MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE US, AS COMPARED WITH THE TREATMENT WE GET IN THE MEDIA OF OTHER SCANDINAVIAN AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. BEFORE CONSIDERING WHAT ACTIONS MIGHT BE PROPER TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION, IT WOULD HELP US A GREAT DEAL TO GET A BETTER FIX ON THE CURRENT SITUATION.

5. WHILE I WOULD BY NO MEANS SUGGEST ANY LARGE EXPENDITURE OF MONEY OR TIME ON SUCH A RELATIVELY SMALL TOPIC AS THE SWEDISH PRESS, I THOUGHT THAT POSSIBLY SOME STORE OF KNOWLEDGE MIGHT ALREADY EXIST ON THE SUBJECT, EITHER IN USIS, THE DEPARTMENT, OR POSSIBLY IN OTHER AGENCIES SUCH AS FBIS. OUR NEED IS NOT FOR A CONCLUSIVE STUDY; WE MERELY COULD USE ANY OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT THAT WASHINGTON MIGHT PROVIDE TO HELP US IN OUR OWN CONSIDERATION OF HOW SERIOUS THE PROBLEM IS THAT WE FACE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: I WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATIVE IF THE DEPARTMENT AND USIA COULD CANVASS THEIR SOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE AND ADVISE US IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE SOME HELPFUL INFORMATION ON THE COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE SWEDISH MEDIA.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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